

PROMISING PRACTICE

PARTNERSHIP | EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

Cook Inlet Tribal Council - CITC HPOG



Rebuilding trust and forging new relationships starts with a handshake.

The Cook Inlet Tribal Council's (CITC) HPOG team consists of 11 people: six full-time and five part-time employees, who handle every aspect of the program's administration. More than half of them are new as of February 2018, including the third program manager in just over a year. The high rate of turnover for such a small team put tremendous strain on the organization, impacting its credibility and trustworthiness.

This presented a significant challenge in assisting program participants with securing employment. Investigation into the deficiency revealed that without a dedicated staff member to focus on job placement, graduate files were not finding their way into the hands of hiring managers. The newly hired Program Manager and newly established Employment Developer joined forces to tackle this issue head on, making it the organization's top priority.

Their first order of business coincided with the introduction of the HPOG Employment Virtual Learning Cohort, which brought 10 HPOG grantees together over four months to share and listen to best practices for employment outcomes. CITC HPOG utilized cohort knowledge, using a career mapping exercise to identify key potential employment partners. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium/Alaska Native Medical Center (ANTHC/ANMC) ranked highest on the list, making it a natural fit for a more involved partnership. After several phone calls and face-to-face meetings, the Program Manager and Employment Developer were able to resolve multiple roadblocks and began implementing strategies to make the process more efficient going forward.

Another identified roadblock was that HPOG participant's application packets were not moving forward from HR to the hiring managers, which prevented HPOG participants from securing interviews. The Employment Developer established direct relationships with hiring managers, allowing him to quickly notify the managers of employment-ready participants. This resulted in an immediate increase in secured interviews as well as employment.

Another area they sought to address was the state's backlog of available CNA certification exams. The long wait to be tested made it difficult for some students to retain the perishable skills and knowledge they acquired during training while others simply pursued other more immediate form of employment. To combat this, CITC HPOG and ANTHC/ANMC created a CNA employment pathway. HPOG participants in the CNA program become eligible for CNA student positions, allowing them to gain experience by shadowing certified CNAs. Upon graduation, they are elevated to a CNA graduate position, which keeps them employed and active in the field until they become certified and eligible to work as full CNAs themselves. This program increased the number of students who pass their exams, while simultaneously addressing ANTHC/ANMC's employment gaps.

"HPOG not only gives you funding but also gives you the tools you need to find out what path you want to take. I am so grateful for HPOG and all of the wonderful people there. They have helped me get to where I am today."

– Christyna N., CNA, CITC HPOG program graduate

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